伊達政宗 蟻矢

二月竜異聞 1

堤芳貞

BUSHI COMICS

Tale of the Crescent Moon Dragon

Date Masamune Koushi

三日月竜異聞 1

伊達政宗 噺矢

Volume 1

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I have made all of the preparations.
I am in your debt.
Is this really all right...
...Lord Katakura?
There is no need to worry.
I will bear all responsibility.
Please continue your work.
Lord Bontenmaru.
Forgive me.
Yes.
I understand.

Bonten maru...
...will not cry.
This unforgiveable act of laying ...
...hands on My Lord.
I...
... Katakura Kojuro Kagetsuna ...

...will devote this body to you...
...for the rest of my life.
Odemori was conquered?!
We had an alliance!
What?
Has the Young Master returned?
What will happen...
...by disrupting Okushu's peace?

Oh?
...has returned to the castle!
The head of the Date family...
...
Lord Masamune
...
Tale of the Crescent Moon Dragon
三日月竜異聞
壱
Chapter One

How rare for the elders ...
...to come and greet me.
As I have returned victorious ...
...have you come to flatter me?
Wrong!
Why did you attack Kotabi's Nishizawa Clan?!
Your treatment of Odemori ...
...was inhumane!
Do you think you can dominate the human spirit...
...by suppressing them from above?!
The Nishizawa Clan is your family.
I am aware.
What of your predecessor's efforts?
You have trampled on the peace your father built!
Silence!

Allies that would attack me...
...can't even serve as my shield!
Omph!
Wait!
Even if you are the Young Master...!
Katakura!
You!
Please understand.
He is on edge.
Lord Masamune has just returned from war.

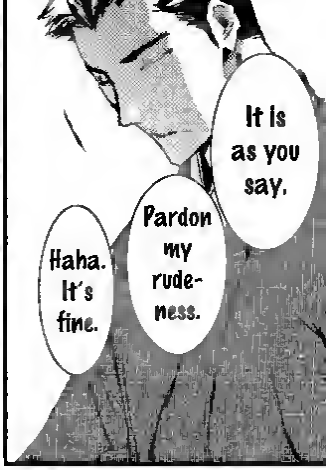
Hmph!
You are just a brat who was favored...
...by the predecessor, Lord Terumune!
To take you in as the heir is-!
Well, well.
Those old fogeys sure can bark.
Hmph.
I was too forward.
Haha!
Whether I manipulated my way here or not.
I've been the head since two years ago.
Yet I am still, *Young Master*.
Not like you.
Among the retainers, you...
Brother!
You have safely returned!

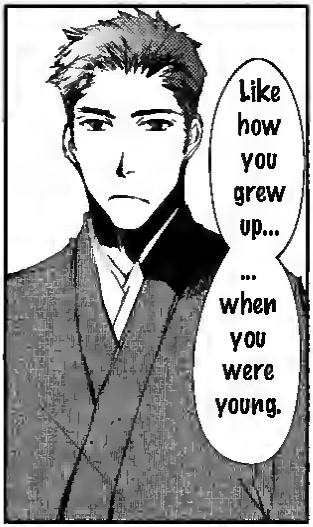
Yes.
Has your fever subsided, Kojiro?
Yes! I feel very well today.
Your complexion looks good.
I'll get well and... ...train with you Brother!
Hmph. Will you last through it?
Ughhh.
Father told me... ...to tell you to visit him.
... He also cares for you, Brother.
Re-gardless of what you may think.
He violently attacked a relative ...
...who had peaceful ties with us for many years!
Saying, I don't need allies who can't be my shields!
It's sheer madness!

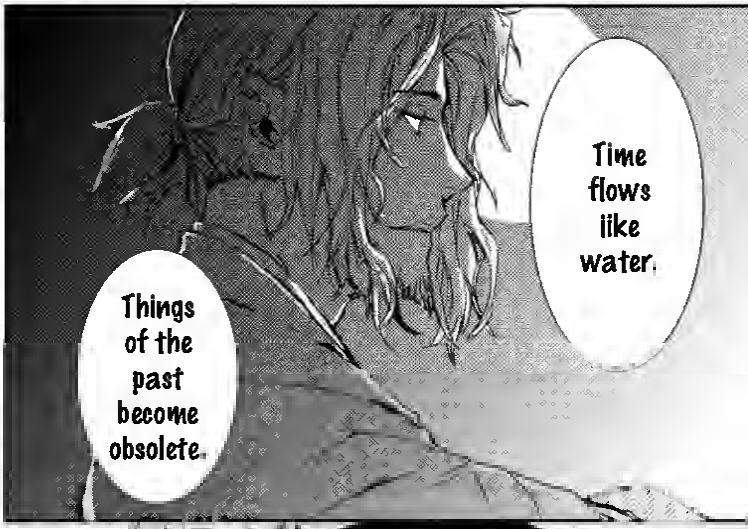
At this rate, Lord Terumune's accomplishments will...!
No. Not Lord.
This is not a laughing matter!
HA HA HA
That reminds me.
He has admired Oda Nobunaga since long ago.
If My Lord would at least ...
That is no different to The Fool of Owari!
...was me, Terumune.
The one who made him Lord...
Have you relinquished everything?
...
I have already retired.
The Lord of Date is Masamune.
I would never!
I-
Do you...
...doubt my eyes?

According to our ninjas, the Nishizawa Clan was secretly...
...preparing to invade from behind Miyamori Castle.
As I suspected.
What of Masamune?
Yes.
He has returned safely.
That man is reckless.
I wonder who he resembles.
I believe I know the answer.
He greatly resembles Lord Terumune.
Hah!
I see.

Was the cause...
...due to Masamune severing ties?
That is possible.
Hm. The chicken and the egg.
Never mind. It was something bound to end.


It is as you say.
Pardon my rudeness.
Haha. It's fine.


Like how you grew up...
...when you were young.


Time flows like water.
Things of the past become obsolete.

To that man...
...this place may also be too confined.

Oh?
A dog?
Our next move ...
...will be to attack ...
...Nihon-matsu.
Is your target ...
There is no need to engage in battle!
...Hatakeyama's territory?! Are we not in the middle of negotiations?!
At least wait until negotia-tions are over!
Is that all you have to say?

I am the Lord of this castle.
I am not feeding useless people like you for free.
Fools who can't even fight. Do you think our territory will expand on its own?
Lord Masamune.
...
Pardon my intrusion...
Even if you are the Young Master, that's-!
Uselessly slaughtering the enemy ...
...will only result in politics based on fear.
Even if you could temporarily pacify them...
...Okushu will eventually fall to ruin.
For the sake of the Date family ...
...please reconsider.
Lord Uchima.
About what you have said.
Lord Katakura.
Our Lord is young.
He does not intend to...
...disrespect his elders.
No, no.
There are those who ...
...compare him to his predecessor.

GULP
So he says.
I was too impatient to try to accomplish everything alone.
I understand your feelings.
However, My Lord...
What?
You have not drunk at all.
I am fine.
I am not drunk.
I will not get drunk.
No need.
I have news from your predecessor.
The Lord of this castle is me.
Are you all right?
That was all.

Treating me like a brat.
?
What is this?

Where did...
...you wander from?
Over there...
What?
Is something the matter?
No, it is nothing.

Soldiers will be stationed in front of the west wing.
The cavalry has been instructed to advance ahead!
The second battalion's preparations are almost complete!
Well, well.
In the end, force was used.
Our accomplishments were in vain.
Like this, both Okushu...
...and Date will come to an end.
Does My Lord intend to rely on military strength to the end?
You truly are reckless.

Lord Terumune.
You have a visitor.
Oh?
Is it another complaint about Masamune?
Really!
Does this mark my coming out...
...of retirement?
Yes.
That is...
...we will first send out a messenger.
This is not an impregnable castle.
I have already resolved myself.

We have shown enough power at the battle at Odemori.
So, we will set up camp here for today.
The spear-men have still not caught up.
LORD MASA-MUNE!
Is Lord Masa-mune here?!
What is it?!
I beg your pardon!
Lord Teru-mune...
...has been kidnapped!

Please forgive our rudeness!
No, Hatake-yama.
You were forced to take drastic measures.
However, it is as I have said.
No matter what you do to me, it will not move Masamune.
I am sorry.
You have mistaken me...
...for a hostage you could use.
I beg to differ!
No matter what, you are connected by blood!
That is why...!
In the Warring States period...
...such things only serve to be...
...tools or shackles.
Brother!

Please rest, Sir Kojiro.
But!
What?!
We expected this to happen.
We forced their hand.
Yes.
I have heard.
Father has...!
I was careless.
I won't let him be alone.
...at a time like this..
I can't leave Brother ...
Argh!
Damn it!
No matter where I go...
...it's always Father!
Lord Masamune!
Never.

Please control yourself within the castle!
SILENCE!
Letting someone be taken from the castle... They are all monkeys!
It is like saying Date Castle is weak!
Do you understand?!
Call for a fast horse, gun, and ninja!
What of the gag order in the castle?
ざわ
CLAMOR
I arranged it as you instructed ...
...upon your return.

According to information from our ninjas...
...his whereabouts have been located.
No matter what it takes, I contain it within Date territory.
Ughh...
Are you going to rest?
For an hour.
I understand.
That's...
...fine.

My Lord!
Will we really take him to Nihon-matsu?
It is not too late to...
It *is* too late!
That man will not forgive us!
Yes.
If we could just cross the Abukuma River...
...we'll reach Hatakeyama territory faster.

Is your master ... ... in the castle ?
Where did...
...you come from?
I see.
Thank you...
...for coming.
I did not dream...

...for this world to be mine.
A black hen gave birth to a dragon.
To those with such desires ...
... people like me...
...are nothing but heavy stones.
I may have had the wrong education!
HA HA HA
I am sorry.
This is all...
...I can do...
...as a father.

Forgive me...
... Bonten-maru.
Lord Masa-mune.
Send the head gunman a fast horse.
Kojuro.

Hata-
keyama
Yoshitsugu
!
Prepare
yourself!
Lord
Terumune!

...of a dragon ...
... ascend-ing to Heaven.
It is worthy ...

Forgive me for disturbing you before the grave.
Lord Endo, Lord Uchima, and Lord Suda have committed seppuku.
They wished to accompany Lord Terumune in death.
I see.

Please allow me...
...to tell you one thing.
Will you not do the same...
... Kojuro?
At that time...
...a lowly person such as myself ...
... put my hands on your eye.
That was what Lord Masa-mune...
... strongly wished for.
Worried about his small-pox...
...the depressed Lord Bonten-maru...
... said...
I am depend-ing on you.

What a faithful fellow.
You know...
... Kojiro.
This may sound strange.
But I...
...have had thoughts ...

...that...
...Brother's right eye...
...was...
...devoured by his dreams.

Yes, My Lord.
We are leaving.
I... ... Katakura Kojuro...
...shall remain by your side.

弐 Chapter Two
【三日月竜異聞】
Tale of the Crescent Moon-Dragon
MASA-MUNE!
Stop!
Lord Shige-zane!
WHAM
You caused Lord Terumune's death!

You are a disgrace ...
...to the Date name!
KRACK!
As Lord of this castle, look what happened!
One-eyed Dragon? Don't make me laugh!

Chapter Two
弐

Say something!
Masamune!
Once the...
...mourning period is over...
...we will attack Nihonmatsu again.
What?!
Weren't you listening to me?!
Argh!
That includes you...
...Shigezane.

Was there a need to?
SLAM
That was ...
... reckless.
Sorry.

Though you are cousins, Lord Shigezane ...
If it was discovered that I raised my hand to Lord Masamune, it would mean seppuku.
I know that ...
...his existence is necessary to the Date.
You know ...
...been acting strange?
That guy ...
Hasn't he...
I mean.
What was that?
He didn't dodge or hit back.
He didn't even ...
...get angry.

...
It hasn't even been a day...
...since Lord Terumune passed away.
He's really gone ...
...isn't he?
Send this to the north.
Yes, My Lord.

Regarding those who committed seppuku ...
Lord Masamune.
You need to rest.
... find out the names of those Hatakeyama men.
After you are done ...
Understood.
This to Edo.
Th-
That's right, Brother!
Don't be foolish.
Some may call me a war fanatic.
However, I choose whom I associate with.
This recent event ...
...will soon reach beyond Okushu.
If I do not send out notices ...
...they'll break from our side and form a Date Enclosure.
Ughhh...
Yes...
DROOP
Go to sleep, Kojiro.
You have gotten thinner.

As I thought.
Brother is great.
...who is still thinking of Father.
Unlike myself ...
Yes it has.
I did not wish to disturb your mourning.
Aha haha.
Never mind that.
Princess Yoshihime.
Mother!
Oh, my.
It has been a while, Kojuro.
That is impossible for him.
Our castle is too important.
Ha ha.
Foolish as always.
That child.

Ah!
Kojuro, wait!
I shall take my leave.
Well, then.
Not at all.
...taking care of that child.
You must be busy ...
...for escorting me.
Thank you...

WHOOSH
Lord Shige-zane ?!
Hey.
You're up early, Kojuro.
Did you not return to Omori last night?
About that.
I got recruited by the veterans to evaluate the soldiers and horses...
...and missed my chance to return.
Heh heh
What are you saying?
That's what I'm good for, after all.
It's fine.
If you overexert yourself ...

Do you remember ?
Though I've succeeded Omori Castle, I'm only 18.
I still can't do much alone.
I feel most relaxed swinging a rod or sword.
When Lord Terumune came...
...he would get all worked up.
Saying, "Show you something good."
This was where...
...I was often beaten by you.
Masa-mune and me.
Yes.
I was often interrogated about you two.
He would laugh happily ...
...at my stories of your fights.
Yeah.
I was told never to go easy in any fight.
Truthfully, I really wanted to stop you two.
Isn't that because you're his guardian?
Omph
It kept me on edge
Now that I think about it, he was pretty strict

So did I.
I...
...liked that person.
Why ...
...didn't he come back here?
At Jutoku Temple.
...he was cremated in the mountains.
I was told that ...

Was it...
...because of him?
"Send the head gunman a fast horse."
He'd never say, I did not do it.
There is no way of knowing.
Oh?
What about me?
Hmph.

WE WILL HAVE OUR REVENGE!!
This time...
...we must avenge the death of Date's 16th generation Lord ...
... at the hands of the Lord of Nihonmatsu Castle, Hatakeyama Yoshitsugu!

Do not waver!
The path of righteousness belongs to Date!
We will annihilate our enemy!
The main culprit, Hatakeyama, has been killed.

TMP
How unusual ...
...to see you idle...
... Kojuro.
Hmph.
I wished to let you rest a little longer.
I apologize.

Masa-mune!
Why not take him as your master instead?
Don't worry for my sake.
What a smooth talker.
Haven't you heard?
...else to say?
Don't you have any-thing ...

So?
What of it?
Do you also plan to...
...assassinate me in my sleep?
YOU BASTARD!
Lord Shigezane!

Please calm down.
What-ever the truth is..
...it is wrong to show My Lord such a rebellious spirit.
I was careless In not remon-strating him.
As long as you know.
When they can't ...
... defeat you, Kojuro ...

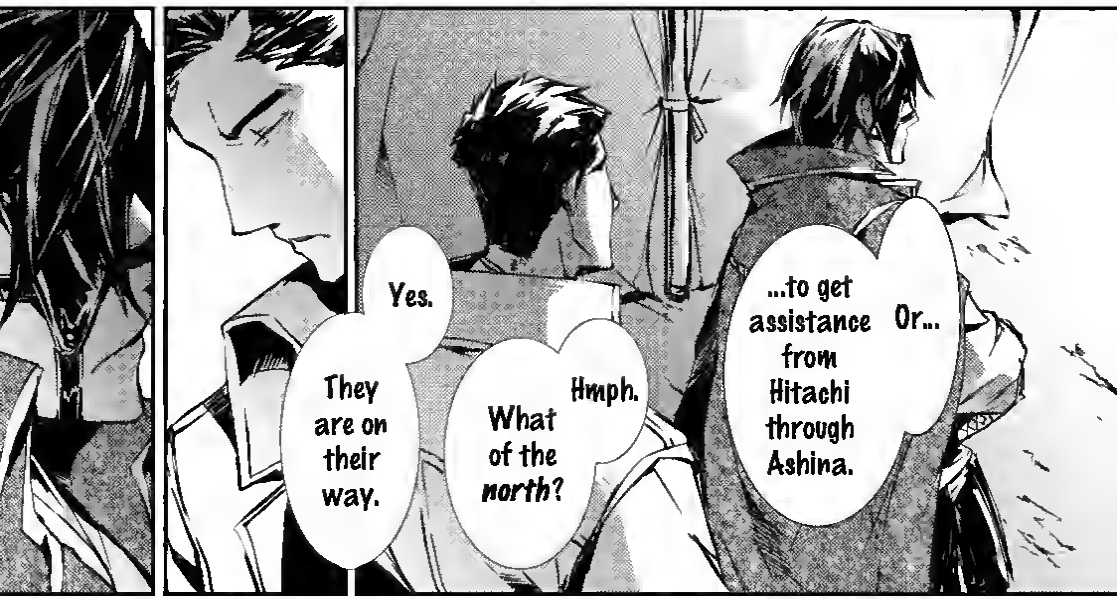
Those two...
...become quite vexed.
Yes. They are very strong.
Don't strain yourself.
That will not happen.
Recently, he has...
...been laughing more often.
Hah.
Undue words.
That is due to My Lord...
...and Shigezane.
Hey...
...Kojuro?
Will Bontenmaru become strong?
Yes. Of course.

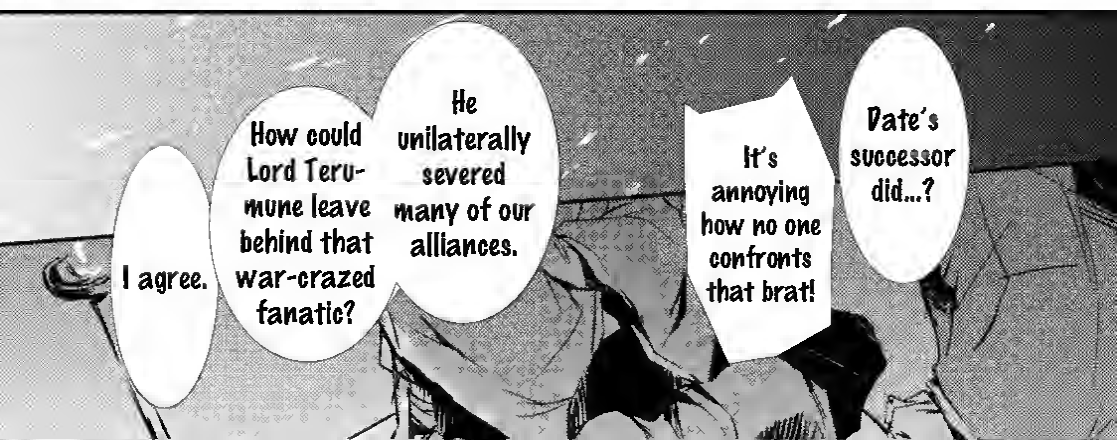
Stronger than you?
Stronger than Father?
He was bare-foot.
That guy.
Like the late ...
...Lord Terumune.

He would always ...
... worry about me.
Ha ha.
How foolish. That child.
Really foolish.
Advance to the front lines!
THE SIEGE OF NIHON-MATSU CASTLE...
...SOON RESULTED IN A STALEMATE.

What of our progress?
Not good.
Within Nihonmatsu Castle ...
...is Yoshitsugu's legitimate heir, Kunitama.
Moreover...
This weather is a problem.

It's a blizzard.
Hey! Bring me some sake!
Yes, Sir!
Nihonmatsu's aim is...
...to hold off Okushu's movements until spring.


...to get assistance from Hitachi through Ashina.
Or...
Hmph.
What of the *north*?
Yes.
They are on their way.


Date's successor did...?
It's annoying how no one confronts that brat!
He unilaterally severed many of our alliances.
How could Lord Terumune leave behind that war-crazed fanatic?
I agree.

ONE MONTH LATER.
My Lord!
There's movement from the east of Date!
Troops are moving north to Suka River!
What?!
Southern Okushu should not be so easily penetrable.
Yes. Some have turned over to their side.

Soma.
Iwaki.
Ishi-kawa.
Nikaido.
Ashina.
The ones we know of are...
We've been be-trayed!
Southern Okushu has been routed!
Is it because of Lord Teru-mune's death?!
30,000!
...combined troops...
Counting their...
It's over 30,000!
...Satake.
And their commander is...

Bando Taro.
Satake Yoshishige!

There is no other choice.
... will result in a pincer attack.
The slightest miscalculation ...
My Lord. Doesn't this make it impossible to conquer Nihonmatsu?
I was aware of his plans, ... how swift. but...
My demon uncle.
Territory expansion ?!
Does he plan to conquer Okushu?
Call for Oninawa Sagetsusai.
What?!
The Young Master has summoned me?
Hmph.
Since it's a request from Kojuro, I'll listen.
But, really.
To me, even Lord Terumune was a Young Master!
Silence, you lazy son!
Calling him that will only anger him.
Father.

As you must be aware ...
...since Lord Terumune's death.
...the castle has been in an uproar.
Why summon ...
... me?
I see.
In addition, this war ...
...has become especially difficult to command.
Hmm.
The odds are indeed slim.
... against 7,000, is it?
30,000 ...

Stop, Father.
You can't wear armor anymore.
It's not good rushing to death.
Stop your yapping.
You will also go, Tsunamoto.
What ?!
Not, What.
I'll sew that glib mouth shut.
What ?!
The Young Master himself ...
...has given this old man a place to die for the sake of Date.
Nothing else matters.
THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 17, 1585.
AT THE SETO RIVER'S HITOTORI BRIDGE IN THE ADACHI DISTRICT.

FWISH
Now, then.
If that's so...
... all the better.
Oh? They didn't run, even against our numbers.
I thought he was just a brat, but he has guts.

Before the dragon takes to the clouds ...
...should I strip him of his scales?

Tale of the Crescent Moon Dragon

Date Masamune Koushi

三日月竜異聞1

伊達政宗嚆矢

Volume 1

Date Masamune Koushi

伊達政宗嚆矢

MEN WHO HAVE LOST AN EYE OR LIMB ARE NOT UNCOMMON.
...THAT GUY'S RIGHT SIDE WAS REALLY FRIGHTEN-ING.
WHEN WE WERE KIDS, FOR A TIME...
...SOME-THING BLACK SEEMED TO OOZE OUT OF IT.
IT'S JUST ...
I COULDN'T HELP FEELING THAT...
...HE WAS BEING DEVOURED BY WHAT WAS UNDERNEATH.
Tale of the Crescent Moon Dragon
【三日月竜異聞】
参 Chapter Three

Chapter Three
三

I will not cry.
Perhaps he has...
...been alone...
...for a long time.
Indeed.
He said...
...only one thing.
Since that day.

East rank. Seto River. Lord Date Shigezane's battalion. Battle formation!
Left rank to the west. Hitotori Bridge. Lord Harada Samanosuke.
Right rank. Lord Rusu Masakage. Battle formation!
Lord Izumida Shigemitsu. Front line, Aotagahara. Battle formation!
What about Nanamiya?
Yes. They'll soon be under Lord Izumida.
It would be good to hold Takakura Castle for a while.
Inform Shigezane at once.
Understood!
Next is...

Tsuna-moto!
Are you here?!
Yes, yes. I'm here!
Among their ranks, there should be soldiers with different sword marks.
Roughly ten people.
Right.
Conspire within their ranks, huh?
Well.
It would be stranger not to do it.
Do you want me to...
...kill them?
Oh, well.
I'll do it if I have to.
To be honest. I'm not really good at that.
Ha ha!
You haven't changed.
Do a good job.
I'll give you two ninjas.
Don't leave any loose ends.
Yeah, yeah.
Will do.
Hey!
Tsuna-moto!

GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE
When I was young ...!
Good heavens!
H-How dare you... speak to Young Master that way!
He himself wasn't mad!
Why not?!
He's young.
How nostalgic.
He greatly resembles...
...his predecessors.
You know, Father.
I...
My Lord!

Too soon.
To begin with ...
...it's impossible with our numbers.
We have half their soldiers at most.
And the opponent is Ogre Yoshishige!
Shirakawa and Iwaki forces attacked the castle!
Their forces are moving north...
...and will soon advance on Seto River!
...has fallen!
Takakura Castle in the east...

Lord Izumida's army...
...at the border of Aotagahara...
...have met with Satake's army!
The General is at the forefront of the army!
If we pull out of Hitotori Bridge...!
WHAM

Kojuro!
Cleanse them.
As you wish.
Yes, My Lord.

Everyone!

From this point on...
...it's war!
Even should you feel like falling to the ground like this snow...
...we must succeed in honor of being a samurai of Date, in honor of our Lord!
WOOO

JUST AS I THOUGHT.
Tsuna-moto.
What do you think...
...of this formation?
Lord Masa-mune discerns that...
...half their forces will not move, depending on the tactical situation.
Because they were originally ...
...allied with Date, after all.
To be honest ...
...it will be very difficult.
...it depends on the opponent's formation.
Hmm...
Even if we pull out of here early...
We can use that to win.
Or rather, that is the only way.
If we are viewed as unfavor-able...
...we'll be over-powered and that's the end.
We don't have enough soldiers ...
...or comman-ders.
Young Master certainly has a gift for war.

But, a war can't be fought alone.
For this past month ...
...it seemed as if...
...he was fighting ...
...all alone.
No.
He was.

So they've come...
...at last.
Listen up, men!
Being overtaken here by a mere number...
...and forced to return to headquarters is a disgrace to the Date name!
An eternal shame!
YES!

Seto River Castle.
Lord Shigezane's army is retaliating against the castle siege!
What of the rear guard?!
Oh. They're heading north.
I see.
It would be good if he can hold, but ...
Just in!
The front lines...
...have pulled out of Aotaga-hara!

Headed by General Satake Yoshishige, the enemy forces have...
...invaded Hitotori Bridge!
Lord Kusu and Lord Harada's forces...
...have engaged in battle!

Are the troops OK?!
Samanosuke has?!
Lord Rusu has taken over as commander!
Lord Harada Samanosuke has been injured!
Lord Shiraishi joined the Ashina army!
CLAMOR
It's become a defensive battle.
What about Seto River?
Did Lord Shigezane...
...win?

Send the Katakura forces in front of the base ...
...to Hitotori Bridge.
Lord Masa-mune?!
?!
Go and protect Lord Masa-kage.
Then make an escape route for Harada.
Then...
...what about here?!
Did you not hear me?

Send...
...for a horse.
I won't allow it!

POKE
TAP
TAP
TAP
The situation seems bad.
Seems the guys at the base are in dispute.
Are you OK?
The higher ups aren't pulling it together.
Hey there.
Can I talk to you...
...for a minute?
Out of my way ...
...Sage-tsu.
Please return, Young Master.
Are you ordering me?
To receive a command from you is an honor.
It would be better if you did not involve Kojuro.
I cannot allow the General to leave.

LORD MASA-MUNE!

YOUNG MASTER!

Head-quarters has...?!
Hmph!
So, Hitotori Bridge has fallen!
There are 500 enemy reinforce-ments on the road!
Lord Shige-zane.
This battle is no longer...
Oh, man.

...means I'll be executed.
Raising the white flag now ...
Umm. Lord Shige-zane ...
Even if I die, there's still Father.
Oh, well.
I...
...won't run away.
... centi-pede.
I swore to this...
Open formation!
Don't leave any openings!
From here is the stronghold!
Don't let even one insect pass through!
YES!

Masa-
mune.
Hey,
now.
You OK
there...
...
Nephew?

I heard you've been so well...
...that you've been wreaking havoc.
I injured you a bit.
Since I only shot you in the leg, you won't die.
!
Don't ridicule My Lord...
...you ogre
Yes, yes.
Don't move.
You don't want me to turn your precious boy...
...into a beehive, do you?
Ughhh...
Well.
I'm not an ogre, you know.
Liar!
Liar!
Liar!
I'll be friends with you depending on your response.
Isn't that right...
...boy?

Un-hand me!
Lord Masa-mune!
Identi-fying myself to you ...
...is a waste, but...
Brat.
Or... ... boy.
Don't ...
...you dare...
...look down on me...
I am Mutsu no Kami.
Okushu-Tandai, 17th generation head of the Date family...
...Date Tojiro Masamune.

Young Master!
RRRRRRR
Let me ask you ...
...one thing.
Hmph.

What makes you thirst...
...to conquer the heavens?
Is that something you need to ask?
Hah! You have a point!
How-ever ...
...that is beyond a small frog from a well like Okushu.
Don't you agree?
It is because I am in a well...
...that I can only see the heavens!

Lord Masa-mune!
Play-time's over.
You have bluffed well...
... Masamune!

Shige-zane!
You!
What are you lying relaxed for?!

FWOOSH
肆 Chapter Four
【三日月竜異聞】
Tale of the Crescent Moon Dragon
Did you see something interesting?
A flock of wild geese ...
...are migrating south.
You will catch a cold...
... Kojiro.
Ah!
I'm sorry, Mother!

I wonder...
...if brother is all right.
Who knows?
From one to the next...
...he dares to fight battles with untiring zeal.
A truly ...
... foolish child.
Brother...
...is not foolish at all.
Ha ha.
What a kind child you are, Kojiro.
It makes me wonder ...
...If you share the same blood as that person.

Chapter Four
肆

It's gotten cold, hasn't it?
Why, thank you.
What?
Well ...
Are you one of Ishikawa's ?
It's fine, it's fine.
What?
Yes.
...we need to talk.
If you are part of Ishikawa's army...
Yes, well...!
Ah!
There's no poison in it, you know.
It's already clear that you are not from Date.
There's no need to hide it.
SMOOTH
Oh?
Are you not one of Ishikawa's?
N-
No, I've been appointed by him!
You're chojo,※ then.
※ multilayered
3

As we've arranged, once the time comes ...
...I'll leave the repeated attacks from the rear guard to you.
Please inform Lord Ishikawa Akimitsu of this in secret.
If asked, Lord Terumune's blood brothers will definitely not ignore our request.
That Th- is ...
... true.
Yes.
I was asked person- ally...
... by Lord Masa- mune.
Jumping that distance.
KRACK
A commend- able skill.
Well, well.
This makes the fourth one.
All right.
Next is to send one to Lord Harada's army.
That's quite far.
Let's see.
I wonder if Ishikawa will betray again.

Hah!
Here's another ballsy brat!
Lord Goro!
Lord Shige-zane has returned!
How nice ...
...is what I'd like to say, but...
If you're the Lord of Date...
...no matter what happens, stand until the very end!
Ridicu-lous!
The General of the army...
...is shamelessly exposing himself!

Valiance could be mistaken for recklessness.
Don't waste your life...
...brat.
I have no use for those I can't use as pawns.

Interest-ing.
Who's a...
...pawn?
Don't make me repeat myself.
Don't you dare...
...look down on me!
Stand back ...
...Shige-zane.
Return to your station.

Hmph.
Hey, now.
Don't be so stub-born.
After I...
...came all this way.

The cavalry has...!
Now, Lord Shigezane!
Get in at least...
...one violent...
...blow!

WAVER
Young Master!
I won't let you escape!
This is not looking good.
THE TIME HAS COME!
Everyone!
Force them back!
Heh.

Just for a brief moment.
Don't do...
...anything rash.
If the pillar of Date ...
...falls to the ground a third time...
...it will affect the soldiers' morale.
I know.
I understand.
BONTENMARU...
I...
...understand.

...WILL NOT CRY.
Young Master.
I have a request.

Call for a retreat.
Lord Goro's strength allowed us to push back.
However, our allies have been routed.
Though ...
...you are the Commander ...
...you are gravely injured.
To continue in this 1-in-10,000 odds campaign ...
...is inexcusable to your predecessors and me as your minister.

I beg you.
Perhaps I was destined...
...to die here?
Forgive me, My Lord!
!
What?!

Kojuro!
Unhand me!
What do you think you are doing?!
Young Master.
This old man ordered Young Master to be taken.
It will be difficult...
...for you to return.
I'll leave the horses...
...to you...
...Kojuro.
Even if it costs you your life.
So the rear guard...
...will remain behind.

YOU FOOL!
Let go!
I...!
If you insist...
...try to...
...shake me off.
If you don't have the strength ...
... then understand this.

Please...
...endure for now.
Why you!
...has not lost.
Date...
These shouts are...?!
It's the General!
He is with Kata-kura Kojuro!
Every-one, attack!
It's Masa-mune!
CLINK

We'll settle this...
...later!
Lord Sage-tsu!
Please at least wear some armor!
It's heavy.
Less weight makes it easier to move.
Father.
You know, I...

...think that guy...
... wants to...
...go somewhere ...
...but doesn't know where to go.
That's how I see it.
Hmm.
You lazy son.
Still running your mouth off, huh?
Not that again.
I crossed thirty roads to get here!
If that's so...
...I shall accompany him wherever he goes.
It's a parent's perspective, but...
...our Lord is quite quick-witted.
Kojuro is the torch.
And Lord Goro is the herald.
They might take us...
...to a place we have never seen.
Going down the road...
...I'll need a baggage boy.
DROOP
Duu
At least call me a companion ...

From this point on...
...we will attack Hitotori Bridge to cut off the enemy!
Those who don't agree...
...can continue after!
Is something the matter?
No.
It's nothing.

Everyone, attack!
It's Masa-mune!
Don't let them escape!
Let me down!
Give me a sword!
I cannot allow that!
I've got you!
STAB

You're alive!
Lord Shigezane!
Of course.
Those Kanto people who are so sensitive to the cold were no match.
AUGH!
Let me down...
...Kojuro.

What about Yoshi-shige?
He escaped.
As expected, he's quick.
Doesn't matter.
He'll soon recoup and come back.
Will you step aside?
I...
...still...!

Don't pretend you don't see it.
You must act...
...according to your responsi-bilities.

This place is not worth dying for.
You are worth 7,000 people.
...or even Lord Terumune.
...or Kojuro...
Not me...
...you.
The head of Date is now...
He's safe!
It's Lord Masamune.
It's you.

You are...
...no longer alone.

I... understand...
This battle...
...and my life...

...I will entrust them to you all.
In exchange.
... entrust your lives...
...to me.
You will all...

TMP
THUMP
Why you!

Aren't you being charismatic!
ROARRR
Reorganize our troops!
Regroup and follow the General!
There is definitely a solution!

We have prepared the horses.
Good.
Those who are wounded, withdraw.
Those with no strength to ride, partner with someone.
All right.
I'll go back to my station and wreak some more havoc.
Shige...
Fuki Goro...
Don't worry.
If I die...
...I'll come back as a spirit.
That way, you won't be lonely. Right?

Don't appear in my dreams.
It'll give me night-mares.
Go ahead and talk like that.
That is, if you had a choice!
Take care!
What about Sage-tsu?
Only that he's headed ...
...to Hitotori Bridge.
I can't turn back, can I?
No, you can't.

Kojuro.
Lend me...
...your shoulder.
Yes, My Lord.
Hah!
The General sent an old man to ward off our attacks...
...and escaped!
You guys, follow them at once!
YES!

Lord Shigezane!
Sama!
You didn't withdraw?
This is nothing.
Just one hand's enough!
Heh.
Says someone who's injured!
Let me join your ranks!
Don't hold me back, OK?
Understood!
Everyone, make this your place to die!
Though our numbers are small, we are Date!
Even if it costs you your life...
...we must not allow them to chase after Young Master!

The battlefield on this day was severe. The Anti-Date coalition had an overwhelming advantage.
Yet both sides suffered great casualties.

One theory states that the naming of Hitotori Bridge...
...was to give tribute in posterity to the many who had died.
The sun is setting.
Night has come.

【三日月竜異聞】
Tale of the 伍 Chapter Five
Crescent Moon Dragon
Decapitating 200 warriors alone is stunning work.
Yet you are indeed a small army.
It is beyond our power to protect you.
There is no use pleading.
I see.
What of your injuries?

Hurry up and walk!
Hey, you!
You won't be able to get through.
Don't try to follow us, OK?
By the way...
I see.
The number of casualties is yet unknown.
...has more or less lost.
Every-one...
Please, Lord Oniniwa!
FWISH
...and to support you!
We have come to capture the ones who killed Lord Sagetsu...

Chapter Five
伍

Even if it's painful ...
...I have applied medicine to the sword and gun wounds.
The bullet in his leg appeared to have passed through...
...so I immediately worked on stopping the blood.
All that's left is to hope poison doesn't circulate from the wounds.
There's no need ...
...to stop the pain.

It'll dull my mind.
Our military forces have decreased by at least half.
Those who survived are all injured.
We must also revise our chain of command due to those who died in battle.
Lord Sagetsu, as well ...

Lord Rusu!
Hey, I heard.
A bullet wound?
Have you...
...heard about tomorrow's advance?
I just received notice.
OK.
We advance at dusk!

We're in a tough situation.
What's that?
This'll end if we stab Bando Taro.
That's the plan, isn't it?
You know, Shigezane.
There's no need to hurry to die.
Those who advance first...
...do not treat their long lives lightly.
Of course.
Yesterday's actions were magnificent.
Sama was vexed.
...
We lost Ibano.
Lord...
...Sagetsu also died in battle.

Date's
...
...future
is...

A considerable number...
...of familiar faces...
...are gone.
Tomorrow... Even here...
A frightening number...
...will come aiming for my head.
Even so...
I...
...have no intention...
...of handing it over so easily.

...I'll make this quick.
If that's your intention ...
Now now
Foolish question!
What about... ... you?
We just have to win...
...right?
This castle...
...can't be used to hold off a siege.
We don't have enough provisions.
Let's set up a large formation in front of the castle.
While retreating slightly, we'll ambush and kill their general.
I see.

WHISPER
My Lord.
Yesterday, beyond Sendo Road...
...a fast horse from Hitachi Satake was spotted.
Hmph.
Can we make it?
There's a 50-50 chance.
Depending on Lord Oniniwa's abilities.
Battle...
...crawls even in the night.

Bando Taro...
...must be aware of it.
BWA HA HA HA HA
Did you see it?!
Masa-mune's way of escaping?!
A brat's power can't measure up after all!
Lord Onozaki! Would you like to join us?
People in southern Okushu have little interest in the young dragon.
Oh, my.
Under-stood!
Don't slack off on tomorrow's attack!
We haven't won yet!

Hmm. We are planning a siege tomorrow.
It is not good for the strategist to get drunk in an inn.
Ha ha! You have a point!
Even so.
It is unusually lax today.
It must be...
...because his wife is from around Date.
Yes.
Regard-less...
He's grumbling over using 48,000 soldiers...
...just to kill Masa-mune.
Well, well.
HA HA HA
As expected of an ogre...
...he has no compassion for his relatives.
I don't communicate with women and children.
Well, if they can be used for leverage...
HUFF
HUFF

The other...
...will soon...
Lord Onozaki!

You bastard!
Are you a Date spy?!
SPURT

We can't fight!
We lost our strategist!
Did someone help him ?!
...Infiltrate our ranks is...!
To have a spy...
Lord Onozaki?!
What's going on?!
That's foul play!
I'll break his vile neck!
Wait, Makabe!
You.
You were one of the spies concealed within the Date army.
Did you switch over to their side?
Or, were you originally one of Date's?
This guy...
...is one of Ishikawa's!

What?!
So the reports of his betrayal are true?!
Our core base?!
We must hurry!
But, to have this happen within our ranks.
Without the strategist, tomorrow's battle will...
Calm down! We don't know that yet!
He should be at the base of the rear guard!
Where is Lord Ishi-kawa?!
My Lord!
By order of Lord Satake Yoshinobu ...
...from Hitachi!
Your absence from within...
...Hitachi Satake territory was detected.

Satomi Yoshiyori from Awa...
...and Edo Shigemichi from Mito have invaded!
You've been ordered to return immediately!
Odawara Hojo also shows signs of response!

Heh.
BWA...
...ha!
...ha ha ha...
...ha ...
Makabe!
Yes!
Don't just stand there, let's go!
Y- Yes!
I knew ...
...he had connections with Hojo, but...
...who'd have thought...
...he'd use it here?

They retreated?!
What is going on?!
...boy.
Good job of saving yourself...
THE COALITION FORCES WITH SUPPOSEDLY OVER-WHELMING FORCE...
...SUDDENLY WITHDREW IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.
WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS TO AVOID THE UNLIKELY PURSUIT FROM DATE...
...IT IS SAID THAT THE WHOLE GREAT ARMY WAS GONE OVERNIGHT.
Could it be a trap?
But with this, Date's name will...!

You said...
...I've taken measures.
In these times...
...we'll soon have to face another.
We are...
...in a war.
I guess.
Hmm.
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
Convince them that Ishikawa had rebelled...
He was really one of Ishikawa's.
...and discretely kill the strategist.
Oh, man. Did I go too far?
A strong brat with bad luck.
Hmph.

Looks like...
...he's managed to survive.
Well.
What-ever it's worth.
The little sister, Yoshi, of this Mogami Yoshiaki...
...must get through at least this much.
Hmph.

If only he wasn't like this.
I was so uneasy.
Not again.
I wanted to rush into the battlefield.
I see!
She recently stopped at Yonezawa!
Yes!
Besides that.
Is Yoshi still the same?
Hmph!
Just because Satake retreated, so did the others.
Oh, well.
Southern Okushu is southern Okushu.
They probably had various intentions.
Satake was an outsider from the Kanto region.
They probably hoped Satake would succeed the Date name after winning the war.
That's complicated in its own way.
Hmph.
Opportunistic bastards.

Shige-zane.
A warrior lives for battles!
Yeah!
You war nut.
Still haven't had enough?
...
I was just doing my duty.
I should be the one doing it.
A general shouldn't lower his head so easily.

I...
...am a retainer of Date, after all.
Lord Masa-mune.
Kojuro.

There is no need for you to...
...lower your head to me.
Because you are my retainer?
Of course...
...there is that.
At any rate.
I have been meaning to...
... apologize to you.

At that time...
To tell you the truth...
I never thought of you...
...at all.
It was for my self-protection...
...and for Lord Terumune's wishes.
That was probably why I was able to commit that unforgiveable act.
You said... Yet.
I will not cry.
...I understand.
That was what you told me.
Actually, I cried like a baby.
Well, that's true.
HEH

I had shamed myself.
Yet you still...
...accepted me.
You will continue to carry all the burdens in the future.
That has already been decided.
Your wound...
...is my fault.

What a faithful fellow...
...was what I said, right?
For me.
The surgery that allowed me to survive here...
...was the only way to not be treated like a criminal.
Although...
...I'm treated like one now.
Well...
That's because your bluntness is annoying. You're arrogant, shy, obstinate, cynical, and a show-off.

Do you...
...want to run away...
...from here?

To where?
I NOTICED ...
...SINCE THE FIRST TIME OUR EYES MET.

Y-
You are releasing them?!
Yeah. I'll leave it to you.
Are you certain, Lord Oniniwa?!
These men killed Lord Sagetsu!
Even if you say that...
...my father protects who he wants to protect.
Moreover.
A battlefield is a battlefield.
Kill or be killed.
To kill outside of such a place...
...is not the way of a warrior.
B-But we were the victors!
Enough.

War...
...is not about winning or losing.
It's about those who have gone...
...and who were left behind.

It's snowing...
Though we waited for it to thaw before attacking Nihon-matsu...
...if we cannot return to Yonezawa, we'll have to stay here a winter.
Do you...
...hate the snow?
The winters here are certainly harsh.
At the same time, there are also things that bless this land.
Someday, all this fallen snow as well.

I'm depending on you.
And...
...I'm sorry.
It seems ...
This is all...
...I can do...
...as a father.

Forgive me...

...Bontenmaru.

This was...
...for the best.
Right, Dear?
You burdened that child...
...the most with your dreams.
Really.
Why, I wonder...
...do men only have the ability...
...to dream and fight?
続
To be continued...

Tale of the Crescent Moon Dragon

Date Masamune Koushi

三日月竜異聞1

伊達政宗嚆矢

Volume 1

Afterword!

Thank you so much for purchasing this comic!

Thinking on how to make the material reader-friendly while keeping in mind the requests of my editor, I decided to modernize the entire story. This is why all the historical references are inaccurate (it's an alternate historical tale). Sorry...

I intended to make the 1st chapter its own separate story because I couldn't think of how to continue the story and had to cut out a number of things. (That's why a person who should have been present was not.)

How to explain it? Various ideas began mixing into the story and it somehow evolved.

The 4th Chapter – Commonly Used Names

Fuji Goro (uncommonly used name) is contrarily used as a common name.

I worried over this, but it became what it is now.

Also, Lord Masamune and Shigezane being school friends is a popular belief.

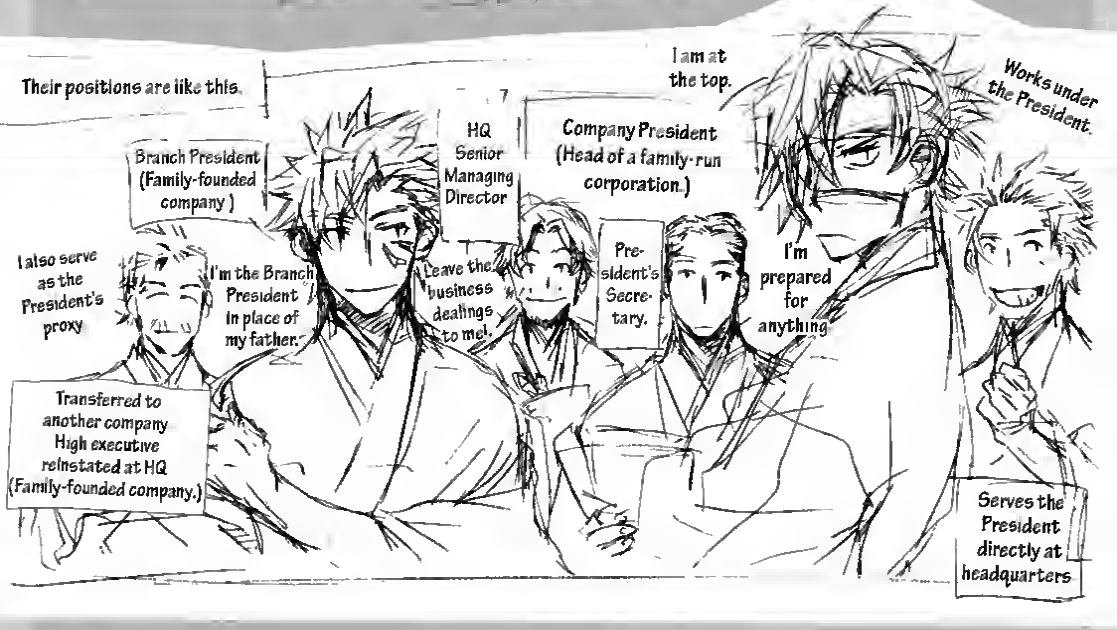
Tsunamoto too.

He has a long-held diplomatic image which is emphasized in the story when he never loses his temper with Lord Masamune.

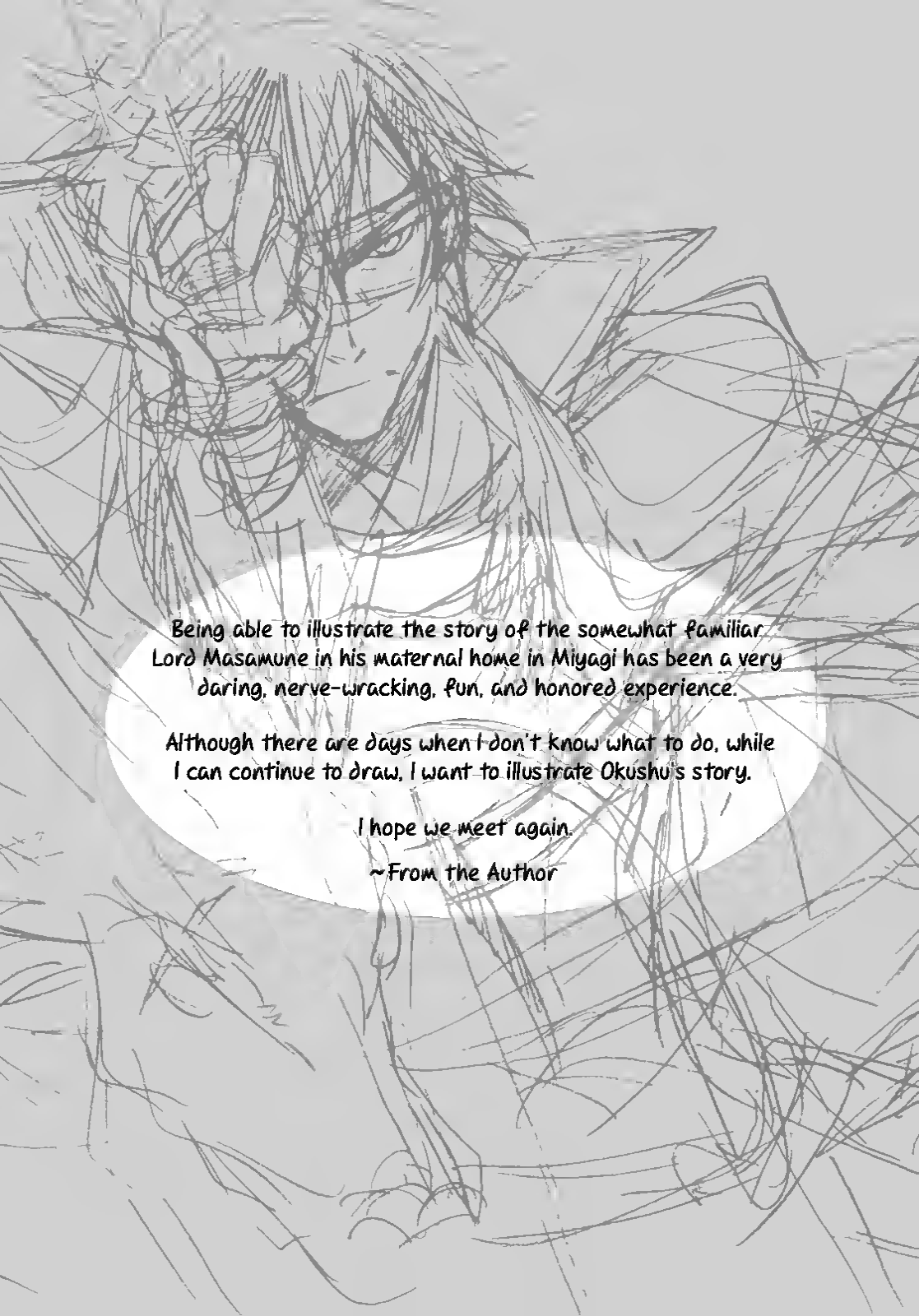
(In the future, even in war, he will be a hardworking, brave general.)

This is off topic, but what made me turn Sagetsu into a small old man was a discussion on Darth Vader's design. The result was an image of Master Yoda...

(The scene where they were at the river left a strong impression on me.)


Their positions are like this.
Branch President (Family-founded company)
I also serve as the President's proxy
I'm the Branch President in place of my father.
Transferred to another company High executive reinstated at HQ (Family-founded company.)
HQ Senior Managing Director
Leave the business dealings to me!
Company President (Head of a family-run corporation.)
President's Secretary.
I am at the top.
I'm prepared for anything
Works under the President.
Serves the President directly at headquarters

When I think back to everyone who helped me with the material and ensured that the places I used were credible, as well as writing the story itself, I get excited over so many aspects of my journey. I now look at familiar places through different eyes, with a curious feeling.



Being able to illustrate the story of the somewhat familiar Lord Masamune in his maternal home in Miyagi has been a very daring, nerve-wracking, fun, and honored experience.

Although there are days when I don't know what to do, while I can continue to draw, I want to illustrate Okushu's story.

I hope we meet again.

~From the Author

三日月竜異聞/1

Tale of the Crescent Moon Dragon 1

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